

Efficacy of the LIFESTEPS® Weight Management Program on markers of adiposity

Jenna E. Heller, Kathleen Woolf, PhD, RD, Terri Verason, MS, RD, Barbara K. Paulsen, MS, RD, and Tracy Pfaffenberger, RD, CD.

ABSTRACT

INTRO: Obesity is a serious public health problem, associated with many co-morbid conditions. Because multiple weight loss methods are available, it is important to identify which are most effective in weight management.

PURPOSE: Study examined the efficacy of the LIFESTEPS® Weight Management Program on markers of adiposity. This program consists of 10-16 weekly meetings, and combines nutrition, physical activity, and behavior change principles.

METHODS: 1592 participants (85.7% female, 14.3% male; age range 16-82 y; weight range 52.3 – 251.4 kg; body mass index [BMI] range 21.0 – 82.9 kg/m²) enrolled in the program between 2003 and 2009. Paired-sample t-tests determined the impact of the program on initial and final markers of adiposity. Data analyzed using SPSS and significance was determined if $P < 0.05$.

RESULTS: Body weight (initial 97.1 ± 23.3 kg; final 92.7 ± 22.4 kg; $p < 0.001$), BMI (initial 35.2 ± 7.4 kg/m²; final 33.6 ± 7.2 kg/m²; $p < 0.001$), waist circumference (initial 109.5 ± 15.2 cm; final 103.1 ± 14.6 cm; $p < 0.001$), and waist-to-height ratio (0.66 ± 0.09 ; final 0.62 ± 0.09 cm; $p < 0.001$) decreased significantly between the initial and final assessments for the 1131 participants completing the program. When participants were asked to select three behaviors most helpful for weight management, 63.7% reported “keep food records,” 40.2% reported “measure serving sizes,” 39.8% reported “do aerobic exercise,” and 39.4% reported “record calories.”

CONCLUSION: Participants of the LIFESTEPS® Weight Management Program significantly decreased makers of adiposity. Programs that emphasize nutrition, physical activity, and behavior modification seem to be the most effective in weight management.